

# Beyond bath basics

**□ Bigger, high-end bathrooms are what buyers want, even in the smallest condos**

By Katherine Dedyna  
Canwest News Service

The modern bathroom bears little resemblance — in size, number, fixtures and comfort — to the utilitarian little rooms that whole families shared not that long ago, one bang on the door at a time.

And it's not just large new houses that boast a big bathroom presence. Units under 1,000 square feet more often contain two full bathrooms along with higher-end cabinets, enhanced lighting and flooring several steps up from linoleum.

"The bigger bathrooms and multi-bathrooms are definitely the way to go these days," says Steve Copp, president of the Victoria branch of the Canadian Home Builders Association and a 20-year veteran of the construction industry.

Builders are trying to fit in two bigger bathrooms wherever they can, even in small condos.

"It's something people are wanting," Copp says, even if it means reducing the size of the living room or kitchen.

Last year, he constructed a 31-unit Lavender Square condominium with 600- to 900-square-foot units which sold out in 10 days. Even the one-bedroom with 600 square feet had two bathrooms.

Why? Even two bathrooms at seven by eight feet apiece take up only 112 square feet, he explains. "It's not like it's half the unit or anything when you put two bathrooms in there."

No question, it would be harder for Copp to sell the condos he builds if they have only one bathroom, especially if they lack an ensuite off the master bedroom. As well, larger bathrooms are also readily convertible for wheelchairs and walkers.

The new bathrooms are anything but basic. Angled walls in new condos also lead to angled shower stalls with attractive tilework rather than the plain Fiberglas shells common a few years ago. The same quality of cabinetry, flooring and lighting fixtures is installed in bathrooms as in the main living areas, to give the desired posh effect.

If condo buyers get in early enough, they upgrade bathrooms even more, with in-floor heat under tile floors, more mirrors to make the room seem larger and drop-pendant lighting to add polish, he adds.

"There's no question that a lot of people have as a priority a second bathroom," says Ron Neal, sales agent for the Julia, a 30-unit condo. In the last few years, there's an increased likelihood that one-bedroom properties also have a second bathroom.

Two-bedroom units of 887 square feet in the condo have two full bathrooms at about 100 square feet total.

It's a popular option with people rooming together because of the expense of getting into the market, he says. "The most popular floor plan in our two-bedrooms at the Julia is where the bedrooms are really quite separate — one at each end of the suite — whether it's for guests or two people sharing." And those have bathrooms attached or close to bedrooms.

Two bathrooms take up just under 10 per cent of the space in smaller units there.

It's part of the "the whole spa theme out there," says sales agent Peter Gaby. Some features in these condos include marble or granite counters, brushed



— Canwest photos

**Victoria real estate agent Kelley Olinger surveys some of the available options in bathrooms**

silver mirror frames, soaker tubs and hand-set ceramic tile floors.

Bathrooms as sanctuaries have led to less kitchen space. Closed-off kitchens have given way to central galley-style kitchens with counters that double as eating bars. Because they open onto living or dining areas, they can be smaller than old-style separate kitchens with three walls.

"Especially in condominiums, kitchens are quite small and compact," says John Newton, president of Homewood Constructors.

"When we have guests over, they all want to hang around the kitchen, so you might as well have them in the kitchen, living, dining area sort of thing."

But people don't want those guests traipsing through their bedrooms to use the bathroom, hence the second-bathroom trend.

A person who prefers a condo under 1,000 square feet with more kitchen and less bathroom is not the norm, says Nanaimo-based Chris Erb, president of the Canadian Home Builders of B.C. It's a market-driven trend.

And because most new condos have no hallways — not at \$500 to \$600 square foot — it's trickier to locate a bathroom equidistant from two bedrooms.

However Newton can't imagine putting two bathrooms into much less than 750 square feet.

As far as expense, bathrooms are "huge," Erb says. "It's one of the most expensive rooms in the house."

But Copp finds that installing upgraded bathrooms from the get-go doesn't cost much extra. A Fiberglas tub costs about \$800 compared to a separate tub backed by tiles for about \$200 more. It's the same for an upgraded vanity. "It probably only increases the costs while you're doing it by \$500 or \$600. If you're ripping it all out and putting it all in new, it's huge."

In renos, the same major bathroom fixation holds.

Copp just finished a reno on a 4,000-square-foot mid-1970s home which did not have an ensuite — unthinkable in a new house that size today. He turned a family room into a 15 by 15 foot master bathroom for about \$20,000, including soaker tub, double sinks, separate toilet area, makeup area and shower with 13 spray heads.

"A master suite bedroom and bathroom are becoming a place that the parents or adults can go and shut the door from the rest of the house and the kids.

They feel like they're almost on holiday some place in a fancy hotel."

Nowadays, if a house doesn't have an ensuite "it's like you're poor or something," Erb says. "We as a society, we want everything and we want it now."

Overall, the norm for houses is now three bath-

rooms, he adds — usually two full-size and a powder room.

Gordon English, owner of Genco Construction, agrees. He usually builds single family homes and townhouses in the 3,000-square-foot range and most of the time, they have three full bathrooms.

Thirty years ago, when he began in the business, one bathroom wasn't unusual.

"I don't know what the rationale is; people can afford it, I guess," he says.

Cultural norms about cleanliness have intensified, with daily showers, shampoos and blow drying prevalent and many more specialized products to enhance the bath and shower experience.

People like to have the option of a main bathroom that's kept pristine should anyone come by, Erb says. "Then you'll have your ensuite where you leave everything out in there — that's your private space."

(VICTORIA TIMES COLONIST)

## HOME OF THE WEEK

Plan No. SEA348

## Warm curbside presence in country-style two storey

A wraparound porch and symmetrical facade effect a warm curbside presence for this country-style two storey.

Inside, an uncomplicated layout establishes shared spaces on the first floor — including a family room with fireplace — and sleeping quarters on the second floor.

The living and dining rooms each enjoy views toward the front of the house. The family room, dinette, and kitchen share one expansive space.

The master suite is accompanied by a generous walk-in closet and full bath. The remaining three bedrooms share a full bath among them.

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<p><b>Houses - Unfurnished 9175</b></p> <p>KELSEY: 1bdrm bsmt suite, clean, bright full windows, quiet, close to bus &amp; amenities. N/S n/p. \$775/mo + elec. DD\$775 Av. Immed. 382-0746</p> <p>LAKEVIEW 3bdrm house on quiet cres. Single car garage. Finished basement. Great for a family or professionals. Close to all amenities. Ref's &amp; lease required. 1700/month. Call 242-6662</p> <p>MAYFAIR 2 BR, \$725 + utils. f/s, n/s, n/p. ref's req. 2 parking spots. Avail Oct. 1. 290-5555.</p> <p>MAYFAIR - 3 Br. f/s, w/d, lg fenced yard, n/p, n/p. ref's \$1250 + uti. 306-329-4944</p> <p>NUTANA 3bdrm, 1200 sqft, f/s, w/d, near Broadway &amp; UoF. \$1450 + uti. 241-4000</p> <p>NUTANA - 1ug 3 bdrm mn fr, newly upgraded, hi eff, furn, a/c, quiet tenants, no dogs. Ref. Oct. 1. \$1200. 653-1801</p> <p>NUTANA New build 3 bdrm 2 1/2 bath, 2 storey, 6 appls, sgl garage, \$2000 per month incl uti. 664-6702.</p> <p>OLD NUTANA bright spacious 4br character home near Broadway, river, f/s, w/d, \$1300 + uti. 934-3132 aft 5pm</p> <p><b>Richmond Hgts Executive</b> character 3 br, home, view of river, no pets, 12 month lease \$1700/mo. 242-3288</p> <p>RENT TO OWN, Riversdale newly reno'd, 3 bdrm + self contained suite, h/w, gar, &amp; yard. \$249,900. Ph: 975-3705</p> <p><b>Silverwood</b> Large dev. 4-br, 4-level split, F/S, D/W, 2-bath, fireplace, fenced ns, n/p. \$1800 + utilities 956-0044</p> <p>SILVERWOOD 3 bdrms, 2 baths, gar, c/a, great location. \$1695 + uti. 241-4000</p> <p><b>ON THE RIVERBANK</b> - Spadina Cres. 3 bedrooms \$1500/mo. Call Pat 221-7285</p> <p><b>Stonebridge</b> Brand New 1535 sq. ft. 3-br, F/S, DW, W/D, 2-1/2 Bath, double garage. Ns, Np. \$2295 + Uti. 956-0046</p> <p>SUTHERLAND - 2 Bdrm small house \$1000 + 3 bdrm duplex \$1300. N/P. N/S. 373-0707</p> <p>UNIVERSITY/BROADWAY, 2 bdrm main flr, next to elev. f/s, w/d. Call 222-5111, \$1200/mo.</p>	<p><b>Houses - Unfurnished 9175</b></p> <p><b>ACREAGE</b> near Willow Grove, 10 acres, 2200 sq. ft., 2 storey (built 1998) 382 plus det off garage, n/s. \$2,500. 251-1386</p> <p><b>Varsity</b> 2 &amp; 3-br houses F/S, W/D, garage, shed, fenced, Parking, n/p. \$795 to \$900+ utilities. 956-0044</p> <p>WILLOWWOOD 2 Br Mobile, \$1000 + uti, f/s, w/d, n/s, n/p. 900 sqft, Ref's. 343-9268.</p> <p>3 BR HOUSE, unfurn'd, uti incl. f/s, n/s, n/p. 8 Ave F South. \$1465/mo 221-3393.</p> <p>4 BDRM Clarence/Cascade schools / park near, d/washer, a/c, w/d, n/p, n/s. \$1700 + uti. Needs nice family! Call 668-8445</p> <p><b>Condos for Rent 9195</b></p> <p><b>Briarwood luxury 2 br., 2 bath condo.</b> Granite countertop, walk-in closet, 6 appl., 2 prkg stalls. \$1,325/mo. Available Oct. 1. Days 652-9777; 262-5050 or eves. 374-0677</p> <p>DOWNTOWN APT. STYLE 2br, 1 1/2 baths, open living area, island kitchen, 1200sq ft, The Terrace on 5th Ave. 5appls &amp; uti incl. \$1450/mo. Refs req. 652-3088</p> <p>LA RENAISSANCE - Downtown Executive, river view, turnkey Condo, 2 Br., 2 storey, \$2500/mo. 931-9929 / 380-7586</p> <p>HALLMARK PL., 2 bdrm, 22nd Flr, 5 appls, uti except pwr, excels. room, dry sauna, hot tub, u.g. prkg, n/s, n/p. \$1,295. 222-3100, 222-3200.</p> <p>DOWNTOWN, 2 bdrm, 2 bath + den Condo. Small Pets OK. Phone 384-0118</p> <p>DOWNTOWN EXECUTIVE LOFT heritage building, huge 1 bdrm, heated up parking, 14' ceilings, all new appll \$1500/mo. Ph. 780-719-7137</p> <p><b>Downtown River View 2-br, F/S, dw, in-suite W/D, Balcony, A/c, u.g. prkg, Pool, Jacuzzi, Amenities Rm, Adult Bldg, ns, n/p. \$1150 + elec. 956-0044 www.eliteproperty.ca</b></p> <p>EASTVIEW - reno'd 2 br ground floor condo, 5 appls, ensuite laundry, n/s, n/p. \$1150/mo + dep. Avail Oct. 1. 384-5368.</p>	<p><b>Condos for Rent 9195</b></p> <p><b>FOR RENT - AVAIL IMMED</b> 2 bedroom apartment-style condos for rent Downtown and University Heights. All units include fridge, stove, dishwasher and in-suite laundry. Rent from \$1350-1800/mo. some utilities included. Avail. call immediately. Please call Donna at 664-6118 during business hours.</p> <p><b>Lakeview Modern 2 -Br, F/S, D/W, W/D, A/C, laminate, balcony, prkg, Rec. center, ns, Np. \$1,025 + elec. 956-0044 Ref's req. Oct 15 - Apr 15. www.eliteproperty.ca</b></p> <p><b>LAKEVIEW - 2 bdrm., bus rt., 5 appl. ensuite laund, rec cent., n/s, n/p. \$1200. 306-445-9048.</b></p> <p>1262 SQ.FT. MAIN FLOOR, 3 bdrm bung, Lawson Hts \$1200. N/p. Oct. 1. 242-5218</p> <p>LAWSON HTS, 2 bdrm ground floor. N/S, n/p. Ref's req. \$950. Phone 382-1941</p> <p>LAWSON HTS, large f. furn. 2 bdrm, 2 bath condo. 5 appl. elevator, secured entry, u.g. prkg. N/S, n/p. no children. Ref's req. Oct 15 - Apr 15. \$1200 incl uti. 242-0763</p> <p><b>LAWSON HTS - SPACIOUS</b> condo 2bdrm, 2 bathrooms, 1070 sq ft, 5 appl's, a/c, ensuite laundry, large balcony backs park, elevator, \$1375/mo, incl heat, water, parking stall, immed poss, n/s, n/p, 6 mo. lease, ref's. Ph: 291-6334</p> <p>MARTENSVILLE, 900 sq. ft., 2 br 1/2 house, recently reno'd, n/s, n/p. \$975/mo. + uti. 220-0870</p> <p>NUTANA - 2 Br, 2 bth, 5 appl., 2 prkg stalls, 1080 sq. ft., next to Market Mall, n/s, n/p. Nov. 1, \$1400 incl. wtr &amp; pwr. 655-1950</p> <p>PEPPER TREE Condos 1 br on Fall Ct, overlooking Willowood g/course &amp; lake A/c, ffp, n/s, n/p. Avail Nov. 1. \$725/mo, ref's &amp; DD req. 956-0681.</p> <p>RIVER HTS, Maple Ridge 2 bdrm condo, \$750 + condo fees, n/s, n/p. 934-7662</p> <p>SUTHERLAND, 2 br bung, 7 appl, sing grge, 1 elec prk, n/s, n/p. \$1275 + uti. 261-6011.</p> <p><b>University</b> Newly Up-graded 6-Blocks to U of S, 3-br, F/S, D/W, in-suite W/D, balcony, Ns, Np. \$1495 Utis. incl. 956-0044</p>	<p><b>Condos for Rent 9195</b></p> <p>WILDWOOD 2 bdrm + den, reno'd, quiet, indrv, \$1200/mo + elect. Avail immed, n/s, n/p. Ref's req. 306-384-3343.</p> <p>FABULOUS RIVER VIEW @ the La Renaissance, 1200 sq. ft., 2 bdrm, 2 bath, u.g. parking, 16th floor, \$2100/month. Call 663-1224 or 222-4372</p> <p>CLOSE TO DOWNTOWN &amp; UoF - 2 bdrm, f/s, w/d, dish/w, m/wave, u.g. prkg (2 stalls up &amp; down), river view, avail. asap \$1450/month. Ph. 382-3178</p> <p><b>NEW 2BDRM CONDO.</b> No smoking, no pets, \$1250/mo. Call: 290-3586 or 222-5047.</p> <p>3 bdrm, 3 bath, ugrd prkg, outside prkg, \$1750, close to UoF, avail. now. 222-2240.</p> <p><b>BRAND NEW 2br condo</b> for the #45 crowd in downtown Langham, 5appls, small pets, \$950/mo. 956-0044 days, 253-4373 eves/wkends</p>	<p><b>Duplexes /4-Plexes for Rent 9220</b></p> <p><b>Forest Grove 3-Br, f/s, w/d, D/W, 1-1/2 bath, deck, fenced yard, No Pets. Ns. \$1100 + uti. 956-0044.</b></p> <p>HAMPTON VILLAGE duplex for rent, exc. for family, 5 appliances, n/s, n/p. \$1200/mo. + uti + \$1200 DD. Ref's req'd. Call: 780-410-0001</p> <p>HAULTAIN - 2 Br, 1 bath, f/s, w/d, undev, bsmt, n/p. \$900 + uti. 880-5567</p> <p>NEW RENO-SILVERWOOD, 3bdrm, 1 1/2 bath, N/S, n/p. Ref's req. \$1100 + uti. 382-1941</p> <p>NEWLY RENO'D 3 Br + den, 5 appl., near airport, avail. immed., \$1750/mo. + uti. + \$1750 DD. Call 780-717-6783</p> <p><b>Houses for Rent-Rural 9235</b></p> <p>NICE 2 &amp; 4 Bdrm in Aberdeen, Walkaw &amp; Cudworth, \$550 - \$800 + uti. Phone 934-2188</p> <p><b>NEW ad</b></p> <p>NORTH BATTLEFORD - 6 bdrm house w/garage, \$1150/mo + uti + \$1150 d.d. Avail. Oct. 1. 780-717-6783</p> <p>WATROUS, 2 bdrm house, sgl gar, \$450 + uti. Oct. 1. 403-284-1984/862-2549</p>
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First Level: 1156 sq.ft.  
Second Level: 988 sq.ft.  
Total Square Footage: 2,144